



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

# Public Health

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May 14, 2009

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H.  
Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **NEW FLU A H1N1 (PREVIOUSLY CALLED SWINE FLU) – UPDATE # 7**

In follow-up to the May 4, 2009 report, this is to provide you with an update on the new flu A H1N1 (previously called swine Influenza), to summarize our activities, and to request that the declaration of a local public health emergency be allowed to expire on Monday, May 18, 2009.

### Disease Summary

As of May 13, 2009, there were 28 confirmed cases in Los Angeles County of new flu A H1N1 in Los Angeles County; this does not include cases reported by the Pasadena and Long Beach public health departments. Thirty-six probable cases are pending confirmation.

Illness from this new flu has been mostly mild to moderate - similar to seasonal flu. Most new flu illnesses have resolved without complications and without the need to see a doctor or receive treatment. Although DPH continues to investigate possible cases, illness clusters, and monitor for severe cases by tracking patient visits and hospitalizations, activities are winding down due to the mildness of the illness and to fewer new reports of illness.

As of May 12, 2009, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is reporting 3,009 confirmed cases of flu A H1N1 in the U.S. in 44 states and three deaths. California now reports 193 confirmed flu A H1N1 cases in 22 counties.

Overall, the WHO has reported 5,251 confirmed cases in 30 countries, including the U.S. and Mexico. There are 61 confirmed flu A H1N1 deaths worldwide: Mexico (56), United States (3), Canada (1) and Costa Rica (1).

### **Department of Public Health Response**

The CDC has revised the new flu case definition. The California Department of Public Health has recommended limiting testing only to individuals in the following high risk groups with influenza-like illness (ILI): (1) Admitted to hospital with ILI or sepsis-like syndrome; (2) Had fatal outcomes; (3) Healthcare worker with ILI; or (4) are part of an epidemiologically defined cluster of illness. Because of this narrower case definition, fewer tests will be sent the DPH Public Health Laboratory for analysis and follow-up and we expect that the rate of identifying new cases will decrease.

DPH continues to conduct enhanced surveillance and case investigation; manage federal resources; and provide reminders regarding respiratory hygiene to the public, health care providers, and partner agencies. Specific activities include:

- DPH Emergency Operations: The DPH Department Operations Center (DOC) has been phased down and the management of this incident is being transitioned into the day to day operations of the appropriate DPH programs. Key response personnel continue to communicate daily on this incident, and communication continues as needed with the County's Office of Emergency Management (OEM).
- During the operation of DOC, OEM was present and assisted in providing liaison support to the Chief Executive Office (CEO) and Disaster Management Area Councils (DMACS).

The activation of the DOC and operation in an ICS structure required the shifting of staff to other duties as well as calling on many other programs that do not usually respond to disease outbreaks. The estimated cost for the first two weeks of the incident is \$848,336 comprised of personnel costs and services and supplies costs.

- Enhanced Surveillance: DPH continues to work with the Long Beach and Pasadena public health departments, emergency rooms, physicians, hospitals, and schools to identify cases and clusters of flu A H1N1 in the County. DPH staff continue to monitor syndromic surveillance systems to follow trends of ILI.
- Case Investigation: DPH continues to investigate reports of ILI occurring within the Los Angeles County public health department jurisdiction. Case investigations in the cities of Long Beach and Pasadena are conducted and reported by the respective public health departments. The investigations thus far have been carried out by DPH field staff which has included late night and weekend hours.

- Schools: Some of the cases identified are among school-aged children and teens. The DPH response approach entails an assessment of the severity and extent of illness and the provision of a set of recommended actions to help reduce local transmission. This response can involve aggressive flu prevention health education; acquiring specimens for identifying pathogens; and closure of specific classrooms, grades or entire schools. To date, DPH has not recommended a school closure using this approach. This approach was recently recommended by the CDC in their revised school guidance. DPH has investigated cases in 12 school settings.
- Antivirals: DPH has warehoused and inventoried Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) materials received, including antivirals. DPH is not recommending the distribution of antivirals at this time. Instead we recommend that antivirals only be used in treatment settings and not as a general preventive or prophylactic measure. Drug resistance remains a significant concern in the usage of antivirals on a preventive basis.
- Health Education and Media: DPH has been working with media outlets and community partners to educate the public about what they can do to avoid all types of flu, including flu A H1N1. Updated information is regularly posted on the DPH website: <http://ph.lacounty.gov>. Attachment 1 includes a list of the materials generated and distributed to the public, posted on our website and disseminated to agencies and community partners, and Attachment 2 is a listing of press releases and media events.
- Specialized Outreach: DPH continues to maintain close contact with governmental and community partners including outreach to health care workers and first responders to provide them with guidance on how to care for potential and confirmed flu A H1N1 cases. Guidance documents for first responders, clinicians, treatment and prophylaxis, homeless shelters, homecare, business travel, prevention and factsheets (English and Spanish) have been developed and posted on the DPH website. Attachment 3 provides a listing of the guidance documents.

### **WHO, Federal, and State Responses**

The following sections summarize response activities being implemented by international, federal, and state agencies.

- World Health Organization (WHO): WHO's current influenza pandemic alert remains at Phase 5 (human-to-human spread of the virus into at least two countries). Given the widespread presence of the virus, WHO considers containment of the outbreak infeasible and continues to instruct countries to focus on mitigation measures.
- State and Federal Responses: The State and CDC continues to host daily conference calls with state health officers to share up-to-date information about their ongoing disease investigations. Representatives from DPH participate in these calls.

**Recommendation Regarding Public Health Emergency Declaration**

On April 28, 2009, the Board proclaimed the existence of a local public health emergency in Los Angeles County following the confirmation of cases of new influenza A H1N1 in California and other states. This action was consistent with California Government Code section 8630 and Chapter 2.68 of the Los Angeles County Code. As the course of this incident has progressed, the emerging pattern of this new flu appears to be mild, and accordingly, DPH recommends that the current public health emergency declaration be allowed to expire on Monday, May 18, 2009.

DPH appreciates the support of the Board, the Chief Executive Officer, and other County agencies and departments (i.e., Health Services, Internal Services, the Office of Emergency Management, and Sheriff) that assisted during the declaration.

We will keep you apprised as warranted. If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know.

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Attachments

c: Chief Executive Officer  
Acting County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

**Information Distributed to the Public and  
Posted on the Department of Public Health Website**

- **Flu H1N1 (Swine Influenza) Updates**
  - Twelve updates were produced from April 29<sup>th</sup> through May 11<sup>th</sup> which included case counts, key prevention tips, frequently asked questions, and sources of additional information.
- **Information for Local Clinicians/Hospitals**
  - Screening Form for H1N1 Testing (May 5, 2009)
  - Specimen Submittal Form (May 4, 2009)
  - Clinician Guidance (May 4, 2009)
  - Healthcare Provider Guidance (May 6, 2009)
  - Treatment & Prophylaxis Advisory (May 2, 2009)
  - Hospital Guidance (May 6, 2009)
  - Home Care Guidance (April 30, 2009)
  - Link to CDC Guidelines
- **For Schools/Child Care Providers**
  - Guidance for School Administrators (May 8, 2009)
  - School Closure Policy Statement (May 5, 2009)
  - Child Care Provider Guidance (May 4, 2009)
  - CDC Guidelines for School/Child Care Facilities Closure
  - CDC Guidance for Colleges and Universities
  - Link to Additional Materials
- **Prevention Information**
  - FAQs about H1N1 Flu (in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Korean)
  - Cover Your Cough! (in English, Spanish, and Chinese)
  - Flu Prevention Tips (poster in English, Spanish, Arabic, Armenian, Chinese, English, Farsi, Khmer, Korean, Russian, Vietnamese, Tagalog, and Thai)
  - Wash Your Hands! Clean Hands Save Lives! (multilingual)
  - Link to YouTube: LA County Dept of Public Health
- **Other Guidelines**
  - Business Traveler (April 30, 2009)
  - Homeless Shelter (April 30, 2009)
  - Travel Agent (April 30, 2009)
  - LA County Employees (May 5, 2009)
  - Influenza A H1N1: Interim Recommendations for Veterinarians (May 5, 2009)
- **Links to Other Resources**
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  - World Health Organization
  - California Department of Public Health
  - Los Angeles H1N1 Flu Website

### **Risk Communications and Media Relations**

Several methods were used to provide information and risk communications to the public. In addition to the provision of printed materials, information was provided via radio, through the web and via print and television news and media. In addition to responding to calls from the news media, calls from the public seeking additional information were received and handled by the DPH's Office of Communications.

#### **Radio:**

- Requested local radio stations to run our pandemic flu preparedness Clean Hands (wash your hands) spots pro bono. At this time, local stations are running our spots as a PSA.

#### **Web:**

- Filmed and cut press conferences in Spanish and English for YouTube channel; updated YouTube channel with educational videos on hand washing and other flu prevention guidelines.
- Daily updated DPH web home page with latest information (including confirmed cases), educational materials, guidance, and links to state and federal guidance/websites

#### **Press and Public Inquiries:**

- Answered hundreds of media calls over a 18-day period (up to Monday, May 11)
- Answered hundreds of calls from citizens, business owners and employees, clinicians, school administrators, day cares, and early child education centers

#### **Media Briefings and Press Conferences:**

- Coordinated messaging with external community partner PIOs (White Memorial Medical Center, City of Pasadena, LAUSD, LA County Sheriff's Department) Wrote and distributed two press releases (issued on April 28 and May 2)
- Scheduled and held seven press availabilities (6 in multiple languages)
  - Friday, April 24: Press Briefing to announce that we know about swine flu, no cases have been confirmed in LA County, but people should follow general health precautions. (313 N Figueroa, 3:00 p.m.). Spanish available.
  - Monday, April 27: Joint Press Briefing with representatives from DPH, EMS, LAUSD, LAX, LACOE and LA Archdiocese. (313 N Figueroa, 3:00 p.m.) Spanish and Chinese available.
  - Tuesday, April 28: Media Availability following Board Presentation
  - Wednesday, April 29: Media Availability in English and Spanish (Hahn Hall of Admin; 10:00 a.m.)
  - Wednesday, April 30: Media Availability for Asian-language media, with English, Chinese, Korean, and Hindi (Hahn Hall of Admin; 4:30 p.m.)
  - Friday, May 1: Press Briefing in English and Spanish (313 N Figueroa; 1:00 p.m.)
  - Sunday, May 3: Press Availability in English and Spanish (313 N Figueroa; 1:00 p.m.)

**E-mail Inquiries:**

- Responded to dozens of e-mails from media and schools
- Arranged several one-on-one interviews with media

**External Relations:**

- Provided educational materials to and coordinated messaging with the Mexican Consulate
- Arranged for DPH staff (Dr. Robert Kim-Farley, Marina Alvarez) to speak to consulates regarding new flu A H1N1

**Printed Materials:**

- Pushed out educational materials to schools, Board of Supervisors offices, businesses (including amusement parks and large employers such as Raytheon)
- Created flu prevention messaging posters
- Distributed flu prevention materials, such as bookmarks, "Wash Your Hands" flyers, and FAQ sheets
- Developed and edited FAQ sheets on new flu A H1N1

**Multi-lingual Outreach:**

- Scheduled and trained multi-language spokespersons in Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Armenian, and Hindi
- Translated educational materials into Spanish, Tagalog, Korean, Chinese, Thai, and Armenian

**Guidance Documents**

- **For Clinicians and Public Health Professionals: Resources**
  - CDC: Guidance for Clinicians and Public Health Professionals
  - Treatment & Prophylaxis Advisory (Updated 5-2-09)
  - LAC DPH: Healthcare Provider Guidance #1 (5-6-09)
  - LAC DPH: Clinician Guidance #4 (Updated 5-4-09)
  - LAC DPH: Hospital Guidance #1 (4-30-09)
  - LAC DPH: Hospital Guidance #2 (5-6-09)
  - LAC DPH: Veterinary Guidance #1: Interim Recommendations for Monitoring and Reporting Influenza A H1N1 in Pigs (5-6-09)
- **Guidance Documents and Information for Special Populations and Situations**
  - CDC Interim Guidance: Taking Care of A Sick Person at Home
  - LAC DPH: Home Care Guidance (4-30-09)
  - LAC DPH: Interim Guidance for Care in Homeless Shelters (Updated 4-30-09)
  - LAC DPH: Business Traveler Guidance (4-30-09)
  - LAC DPH: First Responder Guidance (4-30-09)
- **Schools and Child Care Providers**
  - LAC DPH: School Closure Policy Summary (5-5-09)
  - New CDC Guidelines for School (K-12) and Childcare Facilities Closure (Updated 5-5-09)
  - LAC DPH: Child Care and Early Childhood Education (ECE) Provider Guidance (5-5-09)
  - CDC: Advice to Parents Talking to Children
  - Attendance & Symptom Record
  - Daily Health Checklist: English / Spanish
  - Safety Information Resources for Schools
  - Pandemic Flu Toolkit for Early Childcare Providers and Families